REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SCHOOLS/PROGRAMS IN VERMONT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research report was conducted in response to a legislative request for a study on alternative schools in Vermont. Specifically, the Vermont General Assembly was interested in learning more about the national literature on alternative learning environments as well as about the characteristics of Vermont's alternative programs, including organizational structures, cost factors, relationship to state quality standards, and learning opportunities for students. In addition, the legislature, based on the findings, requested recommendations on possible revisions and/or additions to state policy related to standards, financing, capacity, monitoring and evaluation of alternative programs.

METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data collection that included both a standardized questionnaire and site visits to eleven supervisory unions that involved interviews, observations, and questionnaire completion. Fifty-nine of the 60 supervisory unions provided the information needed to complete the questionnaire. One supervisory union chose not to participate because of the perceived time commitment.

For the purpose of this study, we defined alternative schools as: (a) alternative options within the general education curriculum that are designed for all students; (b) options designed for students at-risk of academic failure that are located both within a middle school or high school setting, or that are off-site; and (c) options for students who are eligible for special education and need therapeutic and clinical interventions, as well as academic support.

The interviews, observations, and questionnaire were designed to acquire information on selected characteristics of alternative programs, including: (a) student characteristics such as age, gender, disability status; (b) program design elements including staff-student ratio, curriculum, assessment strategies, instructional approaches, professional development, interagency collaboration and policies regarding entrance and exit criteria; and (c) program accountability including supervision of staff, program evaluation, and funding strategies.

FINDINGS

The findings are organized around seven questions designed to provide information about students who participate in the alternative schools/programs operated by supervisory unions in Vermont. A brief summary of the findings follow below.

Who Are the Students?

Sixty-nine percent of students in separate alternative programs were male and 31% female. Of the approximately 1,555 students identified in the study as attending separate alternative programs (on- and off-site), 52% were special education eligible and 48% were considered at-risk of academic failure. The vast majority of students with

disabilities were labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled. Of the approximately 97 separate alternative programs identified for this study (on- and off-site), 6% served elementary level students, 19% served middle level students, 52% served high school students, 15% served middle and high school level students, and 8% served elementary, middle and high school students. In addition, eight alternative programs within the general education curriculum were reported as available to all students.

Where Do the Students Spend Their Time?

Students who attend separate alternative programs do so at their home schools, in separate classrooms, or in off-site locations. In addition, some students are participating in alternative learning experiences available to all students in their home schools. It should be noted that for the purpose of this study, only programs operated by supervisory unions were included in the data collection.

Fifty-five percent of students in alternative programs in Vermont attend off-site locations and 45% attend separate programs in their home schools. While there are selected schools creating alternative learning experiences for all students, we were not able to obtain statewide, reliable data on this option. Twenty-eight percent of the separate on- and off-site alternative programs reported that they had been operating for one to two years, and 72% reported that they had been operating for three or more years. These data suggest that the number of alternative programs has grown by approximately 40% since 1998.

How are the Programs Staffed and Supervised?

Almost all of the on- and off-site programs for students labeled at-risk employ licensed teachers, though not all teachers were endorsed in the content areas in which they were teaching. In terms of alternative programs for students labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled, all but a few teachers were licensed and endorsed in special education.

Responsibility for program supervision varied across programs. Fifty-one percent of the programs were supervised by principals, 28% by special education administrators, 6% by a board of directors, and 15% were jointly supervised. Alternative programs that served students with emotional-behavioral disabilities appeared to have more intensive supervision than those programs that were serving at-risk students. The at-risk programs that were located within the middle or high schools were likely to receive close supervision from the principal, while those located off-site appeared to have the least amount of supervision.

How are the Programs Funded?

Funding for alternative programs ranged from approximately $6,000 to $26,000 per student. For programs targeted toward students eligible for special education, the predominant funding source was a combination of local general operating funds and state funds reimbursed through the existing three-tiered state special education funding

formula. Funding targeted for students at risk of academic failure was provided, for the most part, through local resources and Medicaid reinvestment funds.

How Do Students Enter and Exit Programs?

Students entered alternative programs through multiple systems including the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, the school's Educational Support Systems, and through the advisement of the school's guidance counselor. Approximately 70% of the programs reported that they have reintegration policies and 30% reported that no such policies were in place.

What Approaches to Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction are used in Alternative Programs and Learning Experiences?

Approaches related to assessment, curriculum, and instruction varied based on program philosophy, objectives, location, and resources. Schools that had adopted alternative learning approaches for all students often provided multiple choices related to learning content and pedagogy based on high expectations for both academic and social goals. Many of these schools used a variety of instructional techniques including individual and small group instruction, and community-based experiential learning, which integrates knowledge and skills in real-life situations.

For older students at risk of academic failure, community experiences and employment were prominent instructional strategies used in both on- and off-site alternative programs. In general, students enrolled in these programs were asked to participate in state assessments, however, many students refused because they perceived the test as another task they could not successfully complete. Finally, it was noted that many of the students in off-site locations did not have access to physical education, art, music, and health programs.

Alternative programs designed for meeting the needs of students with emotional-behavioral disabilities (EBD) and/or other associated disabilities focused on providing academic, social and therapeutic supports. In addition, psychologists and social workers were often involved in the programs through collaborative relationships with community agencies paid for through school funds.

Across the on- and off-site alternative programs for students labeled at-risk or disabled, a large proportion utilized individualized, small group, and community-based instruction and focused on teaching social skills.

How are Student Performance and Program Effectiveness Evaluated?

While outcome data was collected at most of the programs, the amount and depth of the data varied significantly. Common across the programs was the collection of information regarding attendance, graduation and drop-out rates, individual goal attainment, and disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions, expulsions). Some programs also collected information on student behavior and social skills.

Given the varied and individualized approaches to teaching and learning represented across alternative schools and programs, paired with the lack of a consistent

data base, it would be difficult at this time to assess the state-wide impact of alternative programs on student performance and continuation in school.

OPTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

Two broad approaches for strengthening educational alternatives for students labeled at risk of academic failure and students with emotional-behavioral and related disabilities emerged from the research literature as well as from our data collection efforts throughout Vermont. **One involves enhancing the capacity of general education to serve all students through:**

(a) strengthening educational support systems;
(b) strengthening literacy instruction pre-kindergarten through high school;
(c) explicitly teaching students conflict resolution and social skills beginning in the primary grades;
(d) providing more applied experiential learning opportunities that align with state standards and Carnegie Units;
(e) allowing for flexibility in scheduling and reduction in class size to accommodate alternative learning experiences;
(f) identifying and disseminating information on Vermont schools that have implemented school-wide approaches to promoting positive behavior and supportive school cultures;
(g) evaluating post-school student outcomes; and
(h) supporting professional development for teachers and others in working with students at-risk and those with challenging behavior.

The second approach involves enhancing the capacity of alternative schools/programs through:

(a) intensifying literacy instruction;
(b) developing personal learning plans;
(c) providing on-going professional development to teachers and paraeducators in best practices, including positive behavioral supports;
(d) broadening experiential learning opportunities for students;
(e) ensuring that students have access to art, music and physical education;
(f) developing standards related to teacher ratios, facilities, program evaluation measures, etc.; and
(g) developing interagency approaches to service delivery and funding of alternative programs, particularly for those students labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled.

I. INTRODUCTION

This research report was conducted in response to a legislative request for a study on alternative schools in Vermont. Specifically, the Vermont General Assembly was interested in learning more about the national literature on alternative learning environments as well as about the characteristics of Vermont's alternative programs, including organizational structures, cost factors, relationship to state quality standards, and learning opportunities for students. In addition, the legislature, based on the findings, requested recommendations on possible revisions and/or additions to state policy related to standards, financing, capacity, monitoring and evaluation of alternative programs.

The legislature commissioned the Vermont Department of Education to conduct a policy study on alternative schools in Vermont. The study was awarded through a competitive bid process to a research team at the University of Vermont led by Dr. Ray Proulx and Dr. Susan Hasazi and comprised of team members working in Vermont school supervisory unions and the University.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Beginning in the 1960s, alternative education options, with distinct curricular components and teaching methods, began to emerge in American communities as an increasingly visible component of public school systems (Guerin & Denti, 1999; Katsiyannis & Williams, 1998; Miller, 1995; Newmann, 1981). Students identified as at-risk of school failure in a traditional classroom setting could gain access to educational programs that removed students from a regular classroom and immersed them in a significantly different learning environment. Supported by public school funding mechanisms, alternative education programs focused on finding new ways for students to achieve success within the public school system by changing classroom pedagogy for participating students including altering classroom settings, teaching methods, and curricular objectives (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1995; Wang & Reynolds, 1995). Often considered the next to the last step before a student would drop-out of public schooling, alternative education programs sought to change student attitudes about schooling, reinforce basic literacy skills, reduce incidences of truancy, and remove disruptive or non-compliant students from regular classrooms (Groth, 1998; Raywid, 1994).

Defining Alternative Education

Because much of public school planning occurs at the local level, alternative initiatives that emerged during the last few decades of the 20th century often reflected locally developed solutions to challenges that educators felt they could not handle in the general education program. Depending on local characteristics, local school officials supported a variety of alternative program options, which has led to a range of programs across the country. For example, some schools have alternative environments such as separate classrooms or separate school facilities, while some schools define curricular

components within the school that are different from the general education program (Katsiyannis & Williams, pp. 277-279).

Several decades after the initial surge of alternative school program development, communities continue to develop alternative programs designed specifically for students who come to schools with a myriad of factors working against them such as limited family support, poverty, substance abuse problems, teen parenthood, learning disabilities, and a track record of academic failure (Groth, 1998; Krovetz, 1999; MacIntyre, 1993; Waldie & Spreen, 1993). Katsiyannis and Williams' (1998) national survey of state initiatives on alternative education determined that the current availability of program options found across the country often also depended on the availability of support services provided by community agencies with schools often filling in the necessary gaps.

Highlighting the vast array of possible program options, Katsiyannis and Williams developed a list of descriptors used to identify students considered at risk of school failure, and therefore in need of educational interventions (p. 279). While most survey respondents expressed reluctance to label students, respondents and researchers generated an extensive list used by various state agencies.

> The list identified groups of students such as expelled, suspended, pregnant, homeless, migrant, delinquent, disruptive, dangerous to self or others, in need of remedial education, or released from a correctional facility. . . . Additional student descriptors that were added to the survey listing were "dropouts," "truant," "unmotivated," "academically deficient," "students with behavior problems," and "differing learning styles and needs." (p. 279)

As Katsiyannis and Williams' list illustrates, many students come to school with issues that might interfere with their ability to concentrate on academics, follow a traditional school calendar, and interact in a positive learning environment with other learners without some support from professionals trained to work with these students. Leone and Drakeford (1999) suggested that "alternative education programs [have been developed] for students whose behaviors disrupt the learning of others and otherwise interfere with the order of the school environment" (p. 86).

Given the multitude of institutional responses to students' needs, in recent decades various stakeholders including local supervisory unions, student rights advocates, social researchers, and legislatures have encouraged research into particular aspects of alternative schooling to better understand the impacts of these programs on educational systems and their students.

Best Practices

As described in alternative education research literature, alternative schooling options that report achieving reduced drop-out rates and improved academic performance seem to share similar program elements, regardless of the setting. These include: (a) low student to teacher ratios; (b) curricular components that incorporate student choice, essential skills competency, social skills development, and experiential learning; (c)

supplemental counseling and interagency collaboration; (d) educators trained to work with diverse learners; (e) family and community involvement; and (f) student goal setting (Ashcroft, 1999; Black, 1997; Boss, 1998; Raywid, 1994). In addition, building trust among teachers and learners and developing a sense of community seems an important foundation for many programs (Rossi, Vergun, & Weise, 1997). Organizational capacity to work with discouraged and at-risk learners seems dependent on a school supervisory union's flexibility to provide alternative settings, the prevalence of competent teachers capable of working with different learning styles, and time for students and teachers to develop meaningful relationships. Aleem and Moles (1993) noted positive learning environments incorporated a balance among academics, clear discipline policies, and positive relationships among students and faculty (as cited in Gregg, 1999, p. 109). Gregg noted, "This combination transcends individual student differences to produce desired academic and behavioral outcomes" (p. 109).

Duke and Griesdorn's (1999) study of alternative schools in Virginia suggests a need for school supervisory unions to "develop a continuum of alternatives, each targeting a distinct group of students and involving a design suited to their needs" (p. 89). The research of Pollard, Pollard, Meers, and Rojewski (1996) emphasizes the need for effective transition services and strategies to help students achieve success in new settings as they move from one environment to another. Other researchers have identified a strong correlation between student motivation and self-esteem hypothesizing that academic success begins when students believe in their abilities to meet challenging social and academic problems (Nichols and Utesch, 1998; Krovetz, 1999a). Some research points to practices that strengthen the general education system for all students, thereby reducing the need for discrete programs (Krovetz, 1999b; Sagor, 1999). These practices include heterogeneously grouping children for most of the day, intervening with a well-defined plan when a student falls behind academically, using common instructional strategies in most classrooms and across grade levels, requiring students to use critical thinking skills, and fostering a sense of community for both students and adults in a school.

Because programs vary significantly in their scope and design based on needs identified by individual school supervisory unions, no single plan seems destined for success for all students and educational systems. However, as the alternative education research literature indicates, program planners could benefit from looking at other models. Responding to the proliferation of alternative programming and the continued need of many of our nation's students for a variety of educational and social supports, the United States Congress adopted legislation in 1994 to support public school efforts to serve students at-risk of academic failure. Following the adoption of the Educational Research, Development, Dissemination and Improvement Act of 1994, the United States Department of Education created the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students to help promote research and to disseminate information about successful programs (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/At-Risk).

Vermont Context

Similar to national trends suggested in research literature, the vast majority of Vermont school supervisory unions have established alternative programs to help general

education teachers address the needs of students who appear chronically unmotivated, challenging, and at-risk of academic failure. As this study found, approximately 28% of Vermont's alternative education programs have been in existence for less than two years, which suggests the establishment of new programs seems to be an increasingly high priority for many school supervisory unions.

Following legislative concerns about rising costs of special education and position statements by student advocate groups such as The Vermont Coalition on Disability Rights' (1998) requesting further inquiry into alternative programs, the Vermont Department of Education (1999) conducted a survey of Vermont's alternative school programs which provided a foundation for this study. More recently, during the 2000 legislative session, Vermont's General Assembly adopted legislation aimed at improving public school learning environments and teaching effectiveness for all students.

Act 113, referred to as the "Safe Schools Bill," calls for clarifying discipline policies, procedures, and intervention plans; establishes the extent of authority of public school officials, educators, and administrators in relation to student behavior; and asks the Commissioner of Education to both develop training for school personnel and conduct research on "alternative learning environments" to determine the necessity for developing state standards and funding mechanisms (An Act Relating to Supporting Safe Learning Environments in Vermont Schools, 2000). Act 117, An Act to Strengthen the Capacity of Vermont's Education System to Meet the Educational Needs of All Vermont Students, aims to contain special education costs by enhancing educational programs for all students.

Both Act 113 and Act 117 assert that the practice of developing unique programs at the local level to meet the disparate needs of students has been responsive to students yet school supervisory unions might benefit from greater collaboration organized at the state level. It is our hope that the information contained in this report will lead to an informed dialogue and potentially an expanded framework related to students at-risk of academic failure and students receiving special education services, particularly for students labeled emotionally and behaviorally disabled. It is in this spirit of research-based policy development that this present study was conducted.

III. METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data collection that included both a standardized questionnaire and site visits to eleven supervisory unions that involved interviews, observations, and questionnaire completion. Fifty-nine of the 60 supervisory unions provided the information needed to complete the questionnaire. One supervisory union chose not to participate because of the perceived time commitment.

Definition of Alternative Schools/Programs

For the purpose of this study, we defined alternative schools as: (a) alternative options within the general education curriculum that are designed for all students; (b) options designed for students at-risk of academic failure that are located both within a middle school or high school setting, or that are off-site; and (c) options for students who

are eligible for special education and need therapeutic and clinical interventions, as well as academic support.

Telephone Interviews

A questionnaire was designed to acquire information on selected characteristics of alternative programs. These included: (a) student characteristics such as age, gender, disability status; (b) program design elements including staff-student ratio, curriculum, assessment strategies, instructional approaches, professional development, interagency collaboration and policies regarding entrance and exit criteria; and (c) program accountability including supervision of staff, program evaluation, and funding strategies.

The questionnaire data were collected through telephone conferences with program directors and/or others familiar with the programs. Telephone interviews ranged in time from 15 minutes to one and one-half hours. Information derived from phone interviews was tabulated, summarized, and analyzed in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of various program characteristics found in alternative programs throughout the state.

Site Visits

In addition to the data collected from the telephone questionnaire, the team conducted site visits in eleven supervisory unions to obtain a more in-depth view of alternative programs throughout the state (see Appendix A for a listing of the supervisory unions that participated in the site visits). These sites were identified for visitations based on (a) geographic distribution across the state; (b) differing school governance structures representative of various approaches used in Vermont; and (c) different approaches to alternative programs. These sites included both urban and rural supervisory unions, supervisory unions with multiple schools, and single supervisory unions that were both large and small. Specific interview questions were designed to ensure the collection of similar information across programs. Each of the eleven sites was invited to participate in the study and all agreed. One or two researchers visited each site selected for inclusion in the study, talked with relevant educators and administrators, visited alternative programs, and reviewed associated written information.

Data from both the telephone questionnaire and site visits were collated and analyzed by the team to inform the findings and options described later in the report.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings are organized around seven questions designed to provide information on key elements of alternative programs in Vermont. Within each question, relevant information is provided for three types of alternative programs:
(a) alternative options within the general education curriculum that are designed for all students; (b) options designed for students at-risk of academic failure that are located both within a high school or middle school setting, or that are off-site; and (c) options for students who are eligible for special education and need therapeutic and clinical interventions, as well as academic support.

Who Are the Students?

In order to gain a greater sense of who attends alternative programs, we have written three vignettes of students we encountered during our visits throughout the state. One of the students participated in an alternative program that was required for all students in the school, and two students were in separate alternative programs for students experiencing social and academic challenges.

Deborah

Deborah, a junior attending a mid-size high school in a small city, was not very engaged in school and was concerned about what she would do after graduation. At the beginning of the year, she enrolled in a community-based alternative learning program that was required for all students over the course of the year. She was interested in computer technology and was placed in a large real estate firm to prepare materials for prospective clients. Her performance was excellent and the owner of the business hired her to work after school when the semester ended. During the second semester, Deborah enrolled in a writing course and compiled a portfolio of the materials she had produced during her community-based learning experience. Her goal now is to complete high school, work part-time, and enroll in an associate's degree program in computer graphics.

Bill

Bill, a junior at a mid-sized high school in Vermont, expressed frustration with his schooling experiences by angrily speaking out in class, which often led to detentions after school. Following a pattern of diminishing school engagement, Bill refused to attend detentions, began skipping classes, and spent more time with peers known for deviant behaviors. The school's guidance counselor believed Bill's out-of-school activities and in-school resistance placed him at-risk for dropping out of school entirely. The guidance counselor also noted Bill's capacity for learning and helped Bill enter an alternative program in the supervisory union. Situated in a separate building with fewer students, this program provided Bill with a different way of learning. Bill told his guidance counselor he is more comfortable in this setting and is able to focus on the academic and community projects in his personalized education plan, including working at a retail store in the afternoons. Bill noted that his positive relationships with teachers in the program have been an important factor in how he feels about his future. Now that this option is available to him, Bill looks forward to graduating.

Laurie

Laurie moved to Vermont with her mother in September of this year. She has no extended family in the area and has no contact with her father. Her mother is trying to support the family, but has many personal challenges, and has not found stable employment. Laurie is in first grade in a relatively large

elementary school. This is her fifth public school since she entered kindergarten. While in kindergarten, she was identified as eligible for special education and labeled ADHD. She was placed on medication and received special education services. Since arriving in Vermont, she has been asked to leave every after-school day-care program in her community. Teachers have characterized her behaviors as "totally out of control." Not only does she present classic hyperactive behaviors such as an inability to focus or sit still, she has also demonstrated behavioral disorders and is physically aggressive to other children on a frequent basis. She often bursts out of control, shouting and name-calling at other children. She has also been observed crying inconsolably for considerable periods of time for no observable reason. Laurie's classroom teacher was frustrated and requested more support. The coordinator of special education in the supervisory union reports that children with the behaviors Laurie exhibits are entering schools at increasing rates. Teachers and others want to help, but don't always have the skills and resources. For Laurie, the immediate answer was placing her in an alternative program for children with similar characteristics that will address her social/emotional needs as well as academics.

Most of the students who attend on- and off-site alternative programs, including those labeled at-risk or eligible for special education, typically experienced failure and difficulty prior to their change in program. Interviewees reported that the students felt that "no one cared about them in their previous placement," they felt like they "didn't fit in," and they continued "to get into trouble."

Sixty-nine percent of students in alternative programs were male and 31% female. Of the approximately 1,555 students identified in the study as attending alternative programs (on- and off-site), 52% were special education eligible and 48% were considered at-risk of academic failure. The vast majority of students with disabilities were labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled. Of the approximately 97 separate alternative programs identified for this study (on- and off-site), 6% served elementary level students, 19% served middle level students, 52% served high school students, 15% served middle and high school level students, and 8% served elementary, middle and high school students.

In addition, eight alternative programs within the general education curriculum were reported as available to almost one thousand students. These programs served students with a diverse range of abilities and talents and often provided experiential learning opportunities and individualized approaches to teaching and learning.

Percentage of Students by Gender Served in Separate Alternative Programs (on- and off-site)

Male	Female
69%	31%

Percentage of Students Labeled At-risk or Disabled in Separate Alternative Programs (on- and off-site)

Special Ed	At-risk
52%	48%

Percentage of Students by
School Level Served in
Separate Alternative Programs
(on- and off-site)

Elementary	Middle	High School	Middle & High School	Elementary, Middle & High School
6%	19%	52%	15%	8%

Where Do the Students Spend their Time?

As described earlier, students who attend alternative programs do so at their home schools, in separate classrooms, or in off-site locations. In addition, some students are participating in alternative learning experiences available to all students in their home schools. It should be noted that for the purpose of this study, only programs operated by supervisory unions were included in the data collection. The following examples provide a brief description of alternative learning experiences for all students, an off-site alternative program for students labeled at-risk, and finally, an off-site alternative program for students labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled.

Personalized Learning for All Students

One supervisory union high school is implementing alternative educational programs for all students by increasing access to a variety of educational options. With the guidance of a teacher advisor, students have the opportunity to create a personalized learning plan that integrates traditional studies with innovative options to meet graduation requirements. In addition, supports for students who might be considered at-risk are provided through community agencies in collaboration with school personnel. For many students, the possibility to create individualized studies and the provision of on-site mental health and social work support services means many students stay enrolled in a school that just a decade ago would have required them to attend school at a separate off-site campus.

Integrated Academic and Social Skills in an Off-Site Setting

An off-site alternative program for students at-risk of failing in the general education program provides an environment that allow for individualized supports for academic skills. One teacher licensed through a waiver and one paraprofessional work with 18 students on building personal responsibility and recognizing the importance of taking small steps towards a goal. The educators note the focus of the program is academic with the teaching of social skills integrated into the curriculum. Although the program staff reports to the sending school's principal, the program operates with significant autonomy.

Comprehensive Interagency Supports for Students With Emotional-Behavioral Disabilities

Another program began in 1996 as a separate school providing academic and therapeutic treatment to students in kindergarten through grade12. In the last year it has evolved into a comprehensive system of services for students labeled emotionally/behaviorally disabled (EBD). This program is a collaborative effort between a Community Mental Health Center and the school supervisory union with a cooperative agreement specifying the organizational as well as financial relationships between the two organizations. The students are predominantly male, and many are living in situations characterized by challenging economic conditions. The program is housed in an off-campus facility, jointly financed by the local Community Mental Health Center and the school supervisory union. The program is staffed by licensed teachers, counselors, and therapeutic case managers supervised by both the supervisory union's Director of Special Education and the Director of Family Services at the Mental Health Center. The program includes both academic and adventure-based components stressing important skill development around team building, problem solving, social skills and academics. Students are taught individually or in small groups and develop weekly individual learning contracts outlining academic and social goals. Most of the middle and high school students remain in the program for extended periods of time, some until graduation, while the elementary students are more likely to be reintegrated into their home schools.

Fifty-five percent of students in alternative programs in Vermont attend off-site locations and 45% attend programs in their home schools. While there are selected schools creating alternative learning experiences for all students, we were not able to obtain statewide, reliable data on this option. At the same time, however, it should be noted that many new on- and off-site alternative programs for students at-risk and disabled have been implemented over the past two years. Twenty-eight percent of programs reported that they had been operating for one to two years, and 72% reported that they had been operating for three or more years. These data suggest that the number of alternative programs has grown by approximately 40% since 1998.

Percentage of On- and Off-Site Alternative Programs

On-site	Off-site
45%	55%

Percentage of Programs Initiated Prior to 1998 and After 1998

Pre-1998	After 1998
72%	28%

Related to the time students spend in alternative programs, almost half of the students in on- and off-site alternative programs attend for 76-100% of the day, with the remaining time spent at their home school in specific classes or activities, or in community-based learning. For the remaining students, the time varies between a few hours per week to several hours every day.

How are the Programs Staffed and Supervised?

Almost all of the on-and off-site programs for students labeled at-risk employ licensed teachers, though not all teachers were endorsed in the content areas in which they were teaching. In terms of alternative programs for students labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled, all but a few teachers were licensed and endorsed in special education. In these programs, it was fairly common to have consultation support or some level of direct services from social workers and/or psychologists. Most of the programs had small student-to-teacher ratios, and many interviewees spoke about the importance of small class size in helping to build relationships with students. Overall, the teachers appeared deeply committed to their students, in spite of the challenges the students often presented. These teachers were attempting to create an environment where the students could succeed and felt they were connected to both the program and the people in it. For many of the teachers their roles were as much about mentoring and counseling as they were about building academic competence. One teacher noted, "Students need to feel safe, secure and respected – then we do math. These kids want to come here, there are no truancy issues here."

Responsibility for program supervision varied across programs. Fifty-one percent of the programs were supervised by general education administrators (mostly principals), 28% by special education administrators, 6% by a board of directors, and 15% were jointly supervised. Alternative programs that served students with emotional-behavioral disabilities appeared to have more intensive supervision than those programs that were serving at-risk students. The at-risk programs that were located within the middle or high schools were likely to receive close supervision from the principal, while those located off-site appeared to have the least amount of supervision.

Percentage of Varied Personnel Providing Program Supervision*

Special Ed	General Ed**	Board	Jointly Supervised
28%	51%	6%	15%

*Some programs were jointly supervised by general and special educators
**General educators were mostly principals

Many of the interviewees in alternative programs both on- and off-site reported that teachers had access to professional development. Most of the teachers could attend sessions that were available to other teachers in their school supervisory union, and in addition, a vast majority of the teachers were involved in the state-sponsored BEST training designed to provide teachers with positive approaches for improving student behavior. Most of the programs had more paraeducators than licensed teachers and some supervisory unions allowed paraeducators to participate in professional development primarily related to behavioral and social issues. Interviewees noted that the greatest need for professional development for both teachers and paraeducators involved with alternative programs included such topics as problem-solving, conflict resolution and negotiation skills, and building respectful interpersonal relationships. It should be noted that only a few programs mentioned the need for professional development in the areas of written and oral communication competencies.

Some supervisory unions did not have school psychologists or social workers available to provide services to the alternative programs and contracted with outside agencies such as community mental health centers to provide these services. This was particularly the case for programs for students labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled who needed therapeutic services. When these services were contracted, the school supervisory union almost always paid the agency directly rather than having the agency provide the services through their budget. In other words, interagency collaboration occurred, however school supervisory unions often provided funding for this collaboration.

How are the Programs Funded?

Funding sources for alternative programs varied significantly across the state with programs drawing on local, state, federal and private funding sources. Utilization of funding sources was dependent on program goals, individual supervisory union initiatives, access to funding options and local grant writing capacity. Funding for alternative programs ranged from approximately $6,000 to $26,000 per student. Some program directors indicated that funds were inadequate to fully meet program needs, while the majority of alternative programs reported that they were satisfied with the available financial resources.

For programs targeted toward students eligible for special education, the predominant funding source was a combination of local general operating funds and state funds reimbursed through the existing three-tiered state special education funding formula. Expenses not covered through state special education reimbursement were either offset by local general funds or by tuition received from participating school supervisory unions. Budgets for alternative programs that included special education students were constructed along with the yearly comprehensive plans submitted to the State Department of Education. These funds are subject to both local and state scrutiny.

Funding for within school at-risk alternative programs was provided through local supervisory union budgeting processes. In this way, decisions regarding allocation of resources remained the responsibility of local policymakers. Some school boards approached budget decisions by indexing costs per pupil and fitting programs to the amount of money available, while others provided funds through program budgeting procedures. Some of the programs relied on more than one supervisory union and/or supervisory union to share in generating funds needed for the programs. Interviewees noted these funding sources mostly were used to support personnel salaries and benefits.

Additional funding from secondary sources included Medicaid reinvestment funds, IDEA-B, Goals 2000 and other federal consolidated grants. For the most part, these funds supplemented alternative programs by providing revenue for selected professional development activities, materials and supplies.

How Do Students Enter and Exit Programs?

Students entered alternative programs through multiple systems including the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, the school's Educational Support Systems, and through the advisement of the school's guidance counselor. As noted earlier, two

distinct student populations were apparent: students eligible for special education with behavioral and academic challenges, and students who are at-risk of academic failure and appear "disengaged" or "disenfranchised."

Those students placed in alternative environments and eligible for special education services entered through a series of steps specified in the IEP process. Included in this process is a set of goals and objectives that ultimately determine a student's program and placement. The IEP is reviewed at least annually and decisions about goals and placements are considered at that time.

Those students identified as at-risk of academic failure were usually placed in alternative programs in order to engage them in school and prevent them from dropping out. They were usually referred through the school's Educational Support System or through the guidance counselor.

When asked the question about whether or not separate programs had reintegration policies, 70% of the interviewees said yes, and 30% said no. The policies that existed appeared for the most part to be fairly informal, except for students with disabilities where the process is mandated by law and the appropriate steps must be followed. While most programs indicated that they had a reintegration process in place, we were not able to obtain data on the actual number of students who returned to the general education classroom. This is an area where additional study is needed.

Percentage of Programs with Reintegration Policies

Yes	No
70%	30%

What Approaches to Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction are used in Alternative Programs and Learning Experiences?

Approaches related to assessment, curriculum, and instruction varied based on program philosophy, objectives, location, and resources. Schools that had adopted alternative learning approaches for all students often provided multiple choices related to learning content and pedagogy based on high expectations for both academic and social goals. These schools were attempting to align their flexible educational options with state standards and assessments. Many of these schools used a variety of instructional techniques including individual and small group instruction, and community-based experiential learning, which integrates knowledge and skills in real-life situations. Several of the schools using experiential learning approaches noted that implementation required an organizational commitment to significant blocks of time for teachers to develop mentoring relationships with students. Time was also required of teachers to build relationships with community members who were willing to mentor students in their experiential learning.

Programs that served students at-risk of academic failure, both on- and off-site, depended on low student to adult ratios that allowed for increased personal attention; used individual interests and learning styles to design instruction; and used the community as a classroom through projects, employment opportunities, and service activities. Most interviewees indicated that teaching social skills was a major focus of the curriculum, including instruction related to team building, conflict resolution, and

organizational and time management skills. Teachers often structured academic learning goals through thematic studies that required students to apply literacy and problem solving skills. Interviewees indicated teachers in these programs were knowledgeable about the Vermont Standards and reported they attempted to address these standards within the context of their programs. Schedules tended to be flexible and organized for maximizing hands-on activities. For older students at risk of academic failure, community experiences and employment were prominent instructional strategies used both in on- and off-site alternative programs. In general, students enrolled in these programs were asked to participate in state assessments, however, many students refused because they perceived the test as another task they could not successfully complete. Finally, it was noted that many of the students in off-site locations did not have access to physical education, art, music, and health programs.

Alternative programs designed for meeting the needs of students with Emotional-Behavioral Disabilities (EBD) and/or other associated disabilities focused on providing academic, social and therapeutic supports. Students in these programs were placed in alternative environments through the IEP process, during which a team including the parent, student, and selected school personnel determined that an alternative environment was necessary to provide the student with the needed special education services. For the most part, the curriculum in these programs was individualized based on the IEP and instruction delivered by special educators and supervised paraeducators. These programs focused on behavior management, social skills development, and academic skills. In addition, psychologists and social workers were often involved in the programs to provide therapeutic supports. Students were expected to participate in state assessments but not all complied. There were usually community based learning components of these programs as well. Parent involvement was considered essential and many programs schedule weekly meetings to review student progress and address challenges that parents were encountering.

Across the on- and off-site alternative programs for students labeled at-risk or disabled, a large proportion utilized individualized, small group, and community-based instruction and focused on teaching social skills.

Percentage of Alternative Programs Utilizing
Selected Instructional/Curriculum Strategies

1:1	Small Group	Community-based	Social Skills
75%	84%	46%	63%

How are Student Performance and Program Effectiveness Evaluated?

By definition, most alternative schools and programs provide a context designed to offer students different approaches to teaching than they have experienced in their regular schools. These approaches include smaller student to teacher ratios, individualized programs based on student needs and interests, community-based service and learning opportunities, social and conflict resolution skills, and, in some cases, therapeutic and psychological supports. Because of the varied teaching approaches and individualized student goals, evaluation of student and program outcomes has been designed, for the most part, to reflect the unique perspectives of each of the programs.

In relationship to academic performance, most of the interviewees acknowledged that achievement of the Vermont Framework of Learning Standards was important for all students, including those in alternative settings. However, many of the interviewees, particularly in the programs for students labeled at-risk, reported that the standards-based assessments and curriculum often presented challenges both because of the structure of the programs and the apprehension many students experienced related to traditional academic coursework and requirements as a result of their lack of skills and/or motivation. While most of the programs encouraged students to participate in standards-based assessments, it was reported that often the students refused to take the tests or completed only selected portions.

While outcome data was collected at most of the programs, the amount and depth of the data varied significantly. Common across the programs was the collection of information regarding attendance, graduation and drop-out rates, individual goal attainment, and disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions, expulsions). Some programs also collected information on student behavior and social skills. A small number collected longitudinal data on former students both after they had transitioned back to their regular high school and following graduation. These data were viewed as valuable in order to determine the degree to which students were able to access post-secondary education and training, employment, social relationships, and financial independence.

Given the varied and individualized approaches to teaching and learning represented across alternative schools and programs, paired with the lack of a consistent data base, it would be difficult at this time to assess the state-wide impact of alternative programs on student performance and continuation in school.

V. OPTIONS FOR ENHANCING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

As we talked to educators across the state and reviewed the national research on alternative schools/programs, two approaches emerged to meeting the needs of students at-risk of academic failure, and those labeled emotionally-behaviorally disabled. One approach involved education in separate classrooms or sites. Those programs focused on social skill development, conflict resolution, building relationships with caring adults, and improving academic skills within the context of experiential learning. Another approach involved building the capacity of general education classrooms and schools to provide alternative learning experiences for all students, including those students who were academically talented as well as those who have experienced difficulty in learning. These approaches are not mutually exclusive, however they are inherently different in terms of philosophy and curriculum focus. As such, we have chosen to present two sets of options for enhancing alternative education: (a) options designed to build capacity in general education classrooms and schools to serve all students and potentially reduce the need for alternative programs; and (b) options designed to ensure that alternative education settings both on- and off-site have the capacity to effectively serve those students who are placed in these programs.

A. Options for Enhancing the Capacity of General Education to Serve All Students

Several approaches emerged for enhancing the capacity of general education to serve all students. From the research literature and our observations of schools that had implemented effective alternative programs within the general education curriculum, we identified several themes for consideration, including: (1) strengthening curriculum and instruction; (2) building caring relationships with students; (3) enhancing organizational capacity; and (4) evaluating student learning and program outcomes. For each of the themes we have generated a set of options for consideration.

1. Strengthening Curriculum and Instruction

- Support pre-kindergarten early learning experiences so that all students can be successful when they enter school.
- Ensure that students acquire the necessary literacy skills early during the primary grades through using research-based teaching strategies.
- Strengthen literacy instruction for those students in middle and high school who are experiencing challenges in reading and written communication.
- Provide ongoing professional development for teachers and paraeducators to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to effectively teach a range of diverse learners and manage challenging behaviors in order to reduce classroom and individual conflict and more fully engage students in instruction.
- Explicitly teach students skills associated with conflict resolution and problem-solving beginning in the primary grades.
- Provide more applied learning experiences for students that align with standards.

2. Building Caring Relationships with Students

- Identify school supervisory unions that have implemented school-wide approaches to promoting positive behavior and a supportive school culture, and disseminate these approaches.
- Provide professional development opportunities to help strengthen relationships between students and school personnel as suggested by the research literature about best practices, e.g., teacher advising systems, student leadership and empowerment.

3. Enhancing Organizational Capacity

- Strengthen educational support systems.
- Support organizational goals to reduce class sizes.
- Allow for scheduling flexibility to accommodate alternative learning experiences within the general education system including experiential learning in the community.
- Provide instructional leadership in every school for supporting teachers and paraeducators in implementing best practices.
- Align alternative learning experiences with Vermont's Framework of Standards and Carnegie units.

- Provide leadership at the state level for encouraging joint planning and funding of interagency collaborative efforts.
- Increase outreach efforts to families to encourage their participation in schools – kindergarten through graduation.

4. Evaluating Student Learning and Program Outcomes

- Collect data on student assets such as: (a) meaningful connections with family members, friends and adults in the community; (b) the degree to which students believe they are competent and empowered to make decisions about their lives; (c) the degree to which students are making healthy choices; and (d) the degree to which students are making contributions to a family member, friend, community member or the community at large.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of students who have dropped out and those who have graduated to assess their satisfaction with their schooling experience and determine their current status relative to post-secondary education or training, employment, and social networks. These evaluations should be conducted with all students during the senior year, and with a sample of students two years following graduation for those who graduated, and for all students within three months following a student's dropping out of high school.

B. Options For Enhancing the Capacity of Alternative Schools/Programs

Given the range and variation in staffing, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and funding observed in both on- and off-site alternative programs across Vermont, it seems important at this time to consider a set of state-wide standards for alternative programs based on the experiences of programs in Vermont, as well as best practices identified in the research literature. The policy options for consideration are organized by four themes, including: (1) strengthening curriculum and instruction; (2) enhancing organizational capacity; (3) ensuring appropriate facilities and funding; and (4) evaluating student learning and program outcomes.

1. Strengthening Curriculum and Instruction

- Require programs to provide professional development opportunities for program staff and faculty in the areas of literacy, social skills, problem-solving, and adolescent development through a combination of local and designated state funding.
- Maintain statewide professional development efforts related to developing positive school cultures such as BEST.
- Require alternative education programs to include a minimum of .25 FTE reading specialist with knowledge of adult literacy instruction as part of the program faculty.
- Require use of Personal Learning Plans based on each student's current level of performance and her/his aspirations and goals in academic, social/emotional, career/higher education, and independent living areas.
- Require programs to ensure that students have access to such programs as art, music, physical education, etc.

2. Enhancing Organizational Capacity

- Provide leadership at the state level for encouraging joint planning and funding of interagency collaborative efforts.
- Collaborate with teacher preparation programs in colleges and universities in Vermont to ensure that entering teachers have the skills, knowledge and experiences to effectively teach students at-risk of academic failure, kindergarten through twelfth grade.

3. Ensuring Appropriate Facilities and Funding

- Develop and enforce off-site facilities standards that are conducive to a positive learning environment with appropriate resources including access to library materials and opportunities for hands-on and experiential learning.
- Develop standards for student-teacher ratios that allow for building strong interpersonal relationships between faculty and students through state policy, rules, regulations and funding mechanisms.
- Integrate budgets for alternative programs into the regular budget process to ensure that programs are included as part of regular local policy-funding decisions.
- Establish general accounting systems and procedures for accounting of revenue expenses for all alternative education programs.

4. Evaluating Student Learning and Program Outcomes

- Require reintegration plans as part of admission processes to an alternative program.
- Require programs to collect and report data on student assets such as (a) meaningful connections with family members, friends and adults in the community; (b) the degree to which students believe they are competent and empowered to make decisions about their lives; (c) the degree to which students are making healthy choices; and (d) the degree to which students are making contributions to a family member, friend, community member or the community at large.
- Require alternative programs to report attendance and drop-out rates.
- Require follow-up evaluations of students who have transitioned back to the regular high school setting to determine their level of satisfaction with the teaching and learning opportunities they experienced while in the alternative program and how these opportunities influenced the transition process.
- Require follow-up evaluations of students who dropped or graduated from the alternative program to assess their satisfaction with the program as well as to determine their current status relative to post-secondary education or training, employment, living situations and social networks.
- Include students attending alternative schools/programs in the VSAC exit and follow-up survey conducted with graduating seniors.

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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM SETTING, LONGEVITY, LEVELS AND SUPERVISORY UNIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN SITE VISITS

Selected Program Characteristics of Separate On- and Off-Site Alternative Programs (97)

Summary	On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	Elem.	Middle	H.S.	Mid. & H.S.	Elem., Mid & H.S.
TOTALS - 97	44	53	27	70	6	18	50	15	8
Percentage	46%	54%	28%	72%	6%	19%	52%	15%	8%

S.U.	District Name	Program	Program Setting		Program Longevity		Program Levels
			On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	
1	Addison Northeast	Eagles		x		x	high school
1	Addison Northeast	TAP*	x			x	elementary
1	Addison Northeast	Catamount I*		x		x	middle
1	Addison Northeast	Catamount II*		x	x		high school
2	Addison Northwest	ACT	x			x	middle & high school
2	Addison Northwest	Walden Project		x	x		high school
3	Addison Central	no response					
4	Addison Rutland	Washington Street*		x		x	high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Stars		x	x		middle
5	Southwest Vermont	Mt. Anthony Program		x		x	high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Solutions		x	x		high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Bridges	x			x	middle & high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Step*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Plus*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
6	Bennington Rutland	No programs reported					
7	Colchester	Colchester Youth Collaborative*	x		x		high school
7	Colchester	Target Graduation	x			x	high school
8	Caledonia North	No programs reported					
9	Caledonia Central	Intermountain School		x	x		middle & high school
10	Milton	Alternative Ed Program*		x		x	high school
10	Milton	OZ Program		x		x	high school
11	St. Johnsbury	Corner Stone*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
11	St. Johnsbury	Intermountain School		x	x		middle & high school
12	Chittenden East	Lee River*		x		x	high school
12	Chittenden East	CAPS*	x		x		high school
12	Chittenden East	CBL*	x			x	high school
12	Chittenden East	Cyberspace II*	x			x	middle

* indicates programs that primarily serve students with disabilities

Selected Program Characteristics of Separate On- and Off-Site Alternative Programs (97)

S.U.	District Name	Program	Program Setting		Program Longevity		Program Levels
			On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	
13	Chittenden Central	ACE		x		x	high school
13	Chittenden Central	QUEST*	x			x	high school
14	Chittenden South	LIFE		x		x	high school
14	Chittenden South	Community Skills*		x		x	middle & high school
15	Burlington	ONTOP*		x		x	middle & high school
15	Burlington	Edmunds Alt. Program*	x			x	middle
15	Burlington	Hunt Alt. Program*	x			x	middle
15	Burlington	Richard Milburn		x	x		high school
15	Burlington	ONTOP Satellite*	x		x		high school
16	South Burlington	Bridges Middle*	x			x	middle
16	South Burlington	400 Dorset		x		x	high school
16	South Burlington	Bridges HS*	x			x	high school
16	South Burlington	Avalon*	x		x		high school
17	Winooski	Main St. Academy*		x		x	middle & high school
18	Essex Caledonia	No programs reported					
19	Essex North	No programs reported					
20	Franklin Northeast	No programs reported					
21	Franklin Northwest	Target Graduation		x		x	high school
21	Franklin Northwest	NOVA*		x		x	high school
22	Franklin West	Alternative	x			x	middle
22	Franklin West	BFS Beh. Spec. Program*	x		x		middle
23	Franklin Central	New Beginnings		x		x	high school
23	Franklin Central	Team Odyssey	x			x	middle
23	Franklin Central	House*	x			x	high school
23	Franklin Central	Summit*	x			x	high school
24	Grand Isle	No programs reported					
25	Lamoille North	No programs reported					
26	Lamoille South	Vantage Point	x			x	high school
26	Lamoille South	Alternative Pathways	x		x		high school
27	Orange East	No programs reported					
28	Orange Southwest	Challenger		x		x	high school
28	Orange Southwest	Project Achieve	x			x	middle
28	Orange Southwest	Project Advance*		x		x	high school
29	Orange North	No programs reported					

* indicates programs that primarily serve students with disabilities

Selected Program Characteristics of Separate On- and Off-Site Alternative Programs (97)

S.U.	District Name	Program	Program Setting		Program Longevity		Program Levels
			On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	
30	Orange Windsor	No programs reported					
31	Orleans Essex	Alp1*	x			x	high school
31	Orleans Essex	Alp2*	x			x	high school
31	Orleans Essex	Life Skills*	x			x	high school
31	Orleans Essex	NC Alt Program 1		x	x		high school
31	Orleans Essex	NC Alt Program 2		x	x		middle
31	Orleans Essex	Turning Point*		x		x	middle & high school
32	Washington Central	Alternative Program*		x		x	high school
33	Rutland South	Pathways*	x			x	high school
34	Orleans Central	Orleans Central Alt. Prog. (OCAP)*	x		x		high school
35	Orleans Southwest	Foundations		x	x		middle & high school
36	Rutland Northeast	Functional Life Skills*	x			x	middle & high school
36	Rutland Northeast	Project* Independence	x		x		high school
36	Rutland Northeast	Community Ed*		x		x	high school
36	Rutland Northeast	Harvest Program*		x	x		middle
36	Rutland Northeast	Alternative Ed		x		x	high school
37	Rutland Central	No programs reported					
38	Rutland Southwest	Alternative Program*	x			x	high school
39	Rutland Windsor	No programs reported					
40	Rutland City	Success*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
40	Rutland City	Howe		x		x	high school
41	Washington Northeast	Life Skills Curr.*	x		x		middle
42	Washington West	Crossroads		x		x	middle
42	Washington West	Harwood Com. Learning Center		x	x		high school
43	Washington South	White Pines*		x	x		middle
45	Montpelier	No programs reported					
46	Windham Central	Leland & Gray*	x			x	middle & high school
47	Windham Northeast	Reintegration Program*	x			x	high school
47	Windham Northeast	Drop Out Prevention		x		x	high school
48	Windham Southeast	Middle School Cooperative*	x			x	middle
48	Windham Southeast	High School Cooperative*		x		x	middle & high school

* indicates programs that primarily serve students with disabilities

Selected Program Characteristics of Separate On- and Off-Site Alternative Programs (97)

S.U.	District Name	Program	Program Setting		Program Longevity		Program Levels
			On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	
48	Windham Southeast	Elementary Cooperative*		x		x	middle & high school
48	Windham Southeast	Alternative Program	x			x	elementary, middle, & high school
49	Windham Southwest	No programs reported					
50	Windsor Northeast	LEAD*		x		x	elementary
50	Windsor Northeast	Project Advance*		x		x	high school
51	Windsor Central	No programs reported					
52	Windsor Southeast	Windsor Alternative Ed*		x	x		elementary, middle, & high school
53	Windsor Southwest	Chester Andover	x		x		elementary
53	Windsor Southwest	Green Mtn. H.S. Alternative Ed	x			x	middle & high school
54	Hartford	Hartford Elem	x			x	elementary
54	Hartford	Hartford Reg. Resource Ctr*	x			x	middle & high school
54	Hartford	Wilder School*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
55	Dresden	No programs reported					
56	Springfield	Springfield Choices		x		x	high school
56	Springfield	Gateway*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
56	Springfield	Springfield M.S. Life Skills	x			x	middle
57	Blue Mountain	No programs reported					
59	Essex Town	No programs reported					
60	Battenkill Valley	Arlington H.S. Alt. Ed		x	x		high school
61	Barre	Advance		x	x		high school
61	Barre	K-4 STAT	x		x		elementary
61	Barre	Phoenix		x		x	high school
61	Barre	Transition	x			x	elementary
61	Barre	Alternative Ed	x			x	middle
62	Rivendell Interstate	No programs reported					

* indicates programs that primarily serve students with disabilities

Selected Program Characteristics of Alternative Programs within the General Education Curriculum for All Students (8)

Summary	On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	Elem.	Middle	H.S.	Mid. & H.S.	Elem., Mid & H.S.
TOTALS - 8	4	4	2	6	0	0	5	2	1
Percentage	50%	50%	25%	75%	0%	0%	63%	25%	12%

S.U.	District Name	Program	Program Setting		Program Longevity		Program Levels
			On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	
16	South Burlington	HS Enrichment Program	x			x	high school
25	Lamoille North	STW		x	x		middle & high school
26	Lamoille South	Independent Studies	x			x	high school
26	Lamoille South	Mentoring	x			x	high school
32	Washington Central	Career/STW		x		x	middle & high school
32	Washington Central	Branching Out		x	x		high school
45	Montpelier	CBL		x		x	high school
45	Montpelier	PLP	x			x	elementary, middle, & high school

Site Visits to Alternative Programs (11)

S.U.	District Name	Program	Program Setting		Program Longevity		Program Levels
			On-site	Off-site	After 1998	Pre-1998	
5	Southwest Vermont	Stars		x	x		middle
5	Southwest Vermont	Mt. Anthony Program		x		x	high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Solutions		x	x		high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Bridges	x			x	middle & high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Step*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
5	Southwest Vermont	Plus*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
14	Chittenden South	LIFE		x		x	high school
14	Chittenden South	Community Skills*		x		x	middle & high school
15	Burlington	ONTOP*		x		x	middle & high school
15	Burlington	Edmunds Alt. Prog*	x			x	middle
15	Burlington	Hunt Alt. Program*	x			x	middle
15	Burlington	Richard Milburn		x	x		high school
15	Burlington	ONTOP Satellite*	x		x		high school
23	Franklin Central	New Beginnings		x		x	high school
23	Franklin Central	Team Odyssey	x			x	middle
23	Franklin Central	House*	x			x	high school
23	Franklin Central	Summit*	x			x	high school
26	Lamoille South	Vantage Point	x			x	high school
26	Lamoille South	Alternative Pathways	x		x		high school
32	Washington Central	Alternative Program*		x		x	high school
40	Rutland City	Success*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school
40	Rutland City	Howe		x		x	high school
45	Montpelier	CBL		x		x	high school
45	Montpelier	PLP	x			x	elementary, middle, & high school
48	Windham Southeast	Middle School Coop*	x			x	middle
48	Windham Southeast	High School Coop*		x		x	middle & high school
48	Windham Southeast	Elementary Coop*		x		x	middle & high school
48	Windham Southeast	Alternative Program	x			x	elementary, middle, & high school
52	Windsor Southeast	Windsor Alt. Ed*		x	x		elementary, middle, & high school
54	Hartford	Hartford Elem	x			x	elementary
54	Hartford	Hartford Reg. Resource Ctr*	x			x	middle & high school
54	Hartford	Wilder School*		x		x	elementary, middle, & high school

*indicates programs that primarily serve students with disabilities